



CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall

June 15, 2015, 2 pm

Attendance.

Commission Chair A.B. "Trace" Cooper, Vice Chair Tom Hoover, Commission Members Larry Baldwin, Larry Corsello, Joel Fortune, Douglas Guthrie, Ken Jones, Woody Warren, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Members Harry Archer, Jimmy Farrington, and John Wootten were absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** – Chairman Cooper called the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (April 27, 2015).** – The chairman asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the April 27th regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. Member Baldwin subsequently made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, which was seconded by vice-chair Hoover and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) and "Beach Fund" Update.** – Subsequent to a brief introduction of the topic to the audience by Chairman Cooper, Secretary Rudolph provided four bullet points via [Power Point](#) encapsulating the main take-always contained in the agenda packet. The most recent occupancy tax reports for the months of March and April 2015 were included in the agenda packet and were used to summarize the following: (1) the ROT was up by 27% and 9% in March and April 2015 compared to March and April 2014, respectively (both years include a 6% overall collection rate), (2) the ROT is up by +13% for the 2015 Calendar Year – again the 2015 and 2014 collection rate at 6%, (3) Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-15 up by +31% through ten months compared to FY 2013-14, and (4) The reserve balance (4/30/15 estimate) is \$9.3 million. The secretary concluded by noting that the May, June, July, and August receipts for 2014 exceeded \$2 million collectively, and therefore if we experience the same type of collection in 2015, the reserve will be easily be at the \$11 million level before the end of the summer. Chairman Cooper added that our reserve (or "Beach Fund") cap was raised from \$15 million to \$30 million per [S.L. 2013-223](#).
- (4) **Public Comment.** – None.
- (5) **Other Business.** – As mentioned in an email to the Beach Commission last week, the U.S. Corps of Engineers (Corps) approached the County/Atlantic Beach about this year's (winter 2015-16) dredging maintenance plans for the Morehead City Harbor Project. Conceptually this would be year three of the recurring 3-year cycle instituted at the Harbor that includes offshore disposal in years two and three of the plan, and beach nourishment in year one – mostly in Ft. Macon and along the eastern tip of Atlantic Beach. The President's budget has approximately \$8 million for

the Harbor for 2015-16, which is a very strong number. The President's budget figure coupled with the fact that in order to dredge the "toe of Shackleford" shoal, a pipeline dredge has to be utilized and the material must be loaded into a scow, then tugged back and forth to the offshore disposal site (nearshore berm). This process may be becoming a little cumbersome for the dredging industry and hence considering the logistics and funding, the Corps is considering placing the sand on the beach in year three (2015-16) AND in the next "year one" (2016-17). However the Corps does not want to place sand in the same location along the beach two years in a row for environmental concerns, and therefore inquired if we (County/Atlantic Beach) would be interested in paying for the additional, or delta cost of pumping all the sand further down the beach. The secretary proceeded to show a slide presentation (see [pages 2 – 12](#)) summarizing; (a) the Harbor reaches, (b) historical offshore disposal locations, (c) current shoaling patterns, (d) historical and present beach nourishment reaches and volumes, and (e) a very cursory cost estimate to participate in a 2015-16 "delta" project.

Subsequent to this overview, chairman Cooper mentioned that we're in a very preliminary phase and the purpose of today's discussion was to introduce the delta project to the Beach Commission. Member Baldwin articulated his support for the concept and asked if a "stockpile and dump truck haul" delta project was off the table or still being considered. Secretary Rudolph responded the Corps does not have the environmental clearances to do this type of work and chairman Cooper added that when they broached this with the Corps in 2013, it was met with a lot of resistance. However, if we can get this delta project accomplished, then maybe this can pave the way for a stockpile/haul project in the future. Member Warren asked where would the stockpile occur (hypothetically speaking)? The secretary explained that this would be a beach nourishment project essentially using a pipeline dredge but instead of adding pipe and progressing down the beach; they would let the sand stockpile and big earthmovers could then take the sand down the beach from that point.

Members Baldwin and Jones asked how far down the beach would the sand go in the proposed delta project. The secretary responded that in short, we're still working on this. It will ultimately be predicated on the horsepower of the pumps on the dredge and booster, pumping distance, and density of the sand. Ideally the nourishment fill would start just west of the Oceanna Pier and extend just east of the DoubleTree. The area between the Circle and the DoubleTree, especially the westernmost edge has not received sand in over decade or even two. The area between Dunescape west to the Pine Knoll Shores/Atlantic Beach border has never received sand and therefore does not have a static line. Therefore we don't want to nourish this area or else it would inadvertently extend the static line as well. The Commission agreed and chairman Cooper also mentioned the sand will move westward anyways as documented in the past. This would be a winner for everybody because Ft. Macon receives too much sand, which goes right back towards the channel, so the delta project would help west Atlantic Beach while reducing inlet shoaling.

Member Guthrie inquired about the nearshore berm and why perhaps a new nearshore berm couldn't be placed towards the middle of the island. That would be a great source of nourishment sand for the middle and west portions of Bogue Banks. The secretary agreed and added that this remote nearshore berm concept has been mentioned in the past and again, if we ease into this delta project, then we can pursue other options once a comfort level is reached. The hopper dredges or scows need 30 feet of water to dump sand and that would really be the only limiting factor (from a logistical sense). The Commission also discussed the \$4 million dollars the

State DOT/Port committed to the Harbor this year, which the secretary disclosed is intended to be utilized for the inner harbor and non-beach compatible sediments. If the State backs off from this monetary commitment, then the \$4 million dollars would be taken from the President's budget and would leave only \$4 million, rather than \$8 million of federal dollars for the winter 2015-16 Harbor work – that won't get it done and would essentially torpedo the delta project as well.

The secretary concluded the other business session by mentioning the new Shore Protection Office located in the former Emerald Isle Planning Department is coming along nicely – the walls are painted and flooring should be complete soon. The move-in date is tentatively scheduled for mid-July. The new Coastal Policy Analyst/Governmental Affairs officer will be hired a few/several weeks after that. Secretary Rudolph also mentioned the revenue-sharing topic for oil and gas royalties is still a big issue and there is some preliminary work being done by the office on that front that he will share at a later date if it gets any traction.

- (6) **July 2015 Meeting Date.** – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting would be held on July 27th at 2:00 pm, Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall.
- (7) **Adjourn.** – Chairman Cooper asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.